

## **REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 7, 2010**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilors Roberts and McAlister

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, Marlene Desjardins, Tax Collector, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Kotkin led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT – Peter Gillespie reported:

### **TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD Planning and Economic Development Department MONTHLY REPORT September 2010**

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A Monthly Report From The Planning and Economic Development Department

Prepared By Peter D. Gillespie, Town Planner and Economic Development Manager  
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#### **WELCOME!**

- A new clothing store Red T at 150 Silas Deane Highway.
- Interior fit out is complete at 1260 Silas Deane Highway for renovation of remaining vacant space for the Connecticut MultiSpecialty Medical Group.
- Once Upon A Child – 1047 Silas Deane Highway – Wethersfield Shopping Center has relocated into a larger space.
- 281 Main Street – Studio 281 Makeup has opened.
- Iris Nails and Spa has opened at 1841 Berlin Turnpike.

#### **NEW CONSTRUCTION**

- Exterior façade and Interior improvements are underway by the owner of 526 Silas Deane Highway (Ritz Camera). Funding assistance is being provided by the Town.
- Exterior demolition is underway for a new façade at 990 Silas Deane Highway (Next To Mila Fabric). Funding assistance is being provided by the Town.
- Sapporo Restaurant in the Goff Brook Shops has temporarily closed for remodeling and will reopen in the Fall.
- Webster Bank 1039 Silas Deane Highway is in the midst of significant interior remodeling and renovations.
- A building permit has been filed for a medical testing lab LabXpress at 898 Silas Deane Highway (next to Pelton's).
- Red Lobster has submitted plans for new façade for their location at 1324 Silas Deane Highway.

## **OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES**

### **Developer/Tenant Contacts**

- Staff met with local property owner regarding plans for a new restaurant building on property.
- Working with site selector looking for a site for commercial tenant.
- Working with local realtor looking for site for tenant.
- Met with development group looking at potential redevelopment site.
- Met with design team working on site plan issues for Berlin Turnpike apartment project.

### **Economic Development and Improvement Commission**

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Salute To Business is scheduled for Thursday evening December 9 at 5:30 pm at the Wethersfield Country Club.
- **Wethersfield Shops Local** program continues to develop momentum. To date we have signed up over 100 businesses to participate.

### **Planning and Zoning Commission**

- On July 20 and August 3 the Commission held a hearing regarding proposed changes to the regulations regarding commercial vehicles. The Commission requested staff to address some concerns and revise the proposal. The hearing will be continued to September 8.
- Elected a new slate of officers – Rich Roberts, Chairman, Joe Hammer, Vice Chair and Tom Harley as Secretary.

### **Tourism**

- Through an additional grant from the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism the Commission placed an ad in a magazine insert that appeared in a variety of newspapers in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. To date, the Spring/Summer ad has generated over 4500 requests for information. A Fall ad is also planned.
- The Commission has prepared the attached Fall Event Calendar for 2010.
- The Commission is working on a promotional piece that will be printed and appear on it's website listing all local businesses and contact information for those who provide wedding related services in Wethersfield (Churches, Hotels/Motels, Banquet Space, Restaurants, Caterers, Bakeries, Florists, Rentals, Photographers, Transportation etc...)
- Hosted the Director of the International Press Association for a weekend tour of Old Wethersfield. Thanks to the Historical Society, Webb Museum and Shopkeepers Association for their assistance.

We received great feedback from the visit "I had an amazing time, and my companions were very pleased with the trip. We love your town - it isn't often that we come across a small place so filled with rich history and yet so peaceful and quiet. Everyone we met was incredibly hospitable and friendly. I am grateful for the time that was spent with us. It was a delight to visit Wethersfield!" We expect some good press coverage from this.

**Meeting/Event Schedule September**

September 2	Chamber 8:30 am
September 8	PZC 7 pm
September 8	Shops Local 8:30 am
September 9	EDIC 12 noon
September 21	PZC 7 pm
September 22	Shops Local 8:30 am
September 28	Tourism Commission 5:30 pm

Councilor Kotkin asked for an explanation as to the status of the Wayfinding signage.

Peter Gillespie reported that progress has been made recently with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and significant feedback has been received that has helped, but there is a need to revise some of the documents and specifications. Once the final reviews have been done, he believes the signs can be manufactured during the winter time and installed in the spring time.

Councilor Kotkin noted there is a need to reprint additional brochures due to the response that was received.

Peter Gillespie responded he will be reassessing the brochure need during the winter and the budget will be reviewed during this time also.

Councilor Kotkin noted that Tourism was looking to revise their visitor comment card to ensure the questions being asked are the right questions.

Peter Gillespie responded that he has some people who are willing to hand out the comment cards. The town's consultant is also looking at the comment cards so the Town has some tangible statistics that can be used for budget requests.

Deputy Mayor Console commented on the large number of "for sale" signs around town and inquired as to whether there is a way for the Planning Department to compile statistics from realtors regarding the number of houses for sale and why they are for sale. Deputy Mayor Console also inquired as to when elderly people move out and young families move in, how that would impact the school system, and if families are moving out, is it because of our school system.

Peter Gillespie noted that trends can be looked at over the last few years.

Councilor Hurley commented on the Business Friendly meeting recently held and asked Peter Gillespie if he had received any feedback.

Peter Gillespie responded that he did receive feedback and it generated additional comments. He

is going to forward notes to the members of the committee attending as well as those who could not attend.

PROCLAMATION: Presented to Barbara Manning on behalf of the Daughters of the Revolution for Constitution Week. Ms. Manning did not address the meeting.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the report from the Resource Officer and the different incidents that have occurred at the high school and voiced his concern in the Town's school system. He noted that these disruptions affect everyone in the school. Robert Young also commented on the issue brought up by Deputy Mayor Console regarding the number of houses for sale in Wethersfield and the economy.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Drake reported for the Wilkus Farm Committee and the potential for an easement on 10 acres of land. He hopes for a resolution tonight on this matter. He also reported for the Infrastructure/Public Works and reported the Town Council met on the water problems at Jameswell Road and in addition to the Town Engineer's plan options, there is also an outside engineer looking at the problem.

Councilor Manousos reported that he met with RaeAnn Palmer and Lt. Powers regarding the short term parking issue in front of Village Pizza and Lucky Lou's in Old Wethersfield.

RaeAnn Palmer reported that a compromise was reached with regards to the short term parking issue. The thirteen parking spaces in front of Village Pizza will be split so that half the spaces will have a one hour limit and the other half will have a two hour limit. The parking spaces in front of Lucky Lou's will have a two hour limit. This matter will be revisited in three months. There was also an agreement that the entire village needs to be looked at to get a sense of what is needed in terms of parking.

Councilor Manousos noted that traffic has increased in Old Wethersfield and noted this is a good problem to have, but it's just trying to find a solution that will work for all the businesses.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if it is going to be self policed by the business owners.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that she has spoken with Lt. Power who will try to use support service resources to get occasional enforcement.

Councilor Manousos also reported that the EDIC was meeting on Thursday and that the Finance Subcommittee will meet on September 8 regarding tenant improvement program.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Kotkin reported that he received a copy of Mike Turner's letter sent to Peter Gillespie, Jeff Bridges and RaeAnn Palmer regarding the AT&T cable boxes. He noted that comments made by Council members at the last Town Council meeting were not addressed in the letter and asked if that additional information can be forwarded to P & Z.

Councilor Montinieri noted that he appreciates the work Mike Turner has done with this matter, and he has taken the opportunity to look at specific locations where some of the boxes are located. He noted that the boxes look bad and in some areas the box creates some safety issues. Councilor Montinieri noted that the language referenced in the material that Mike Turner distributed to Council, the federal guidelines of communications have given latitude to communication organizations to have access to right of ways. He notes there is some confusion as to what are the exact guidelines. He added that he is not satisfied with the results of AT&T's report, not satisfied with what is being passed on to Planning and Zoning and feels the residents are not happy with the situation.

Councilor Drake commented that he agreed with Councilor Montinieri statement and added that the Council should wait to see what comes back from Planning and Zoning.

Councilor Manousos asked when AT&T started installing the boxes in town.

Councilor Montinieri responded that AT&T started installing the boxes in 2006.

Councilor Manousos asked if at that time, were there any specifications from AT&T.

Councilor Montinieri responded that when the boxes were installed in 2006, it resulted in a public utilities investigation which came back to the municipality that stated that it had a right to intervene. But by that time, a number of boxes had been installed and AT&T stated that they would work with the Town to move some of the boxes.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that along with surrounding towns, the Town Manager did testify, on behalf of the Council and the Town about the Town's opinion on the boxes being installed. Although the Town did not get the result it wanted, the Town did get some effort to work together with AT&T.

Councilor Manousos commented that the Town should be cautious that it doesn't give up a position or location that isn't in front of a residence but then turns around and find that AT&T puts a box in front of a residence.

Deputy Mayor Console noted that Wethersfield was one of the first towns to get the AT&T boxes. In other towns, AT&T made an effort to make the boxes look better.

Councilor Kotkin commented that due to the number of complaints, the Department of Public Utility Commission opened an investigation. As a result, AT&T was ordered to consult with the Towns before installing the cable boxes. But there wasn't any order to move the existing boxes. He noted that his concern with the memo was that it did not characterize the Town's concerns.

Deputy Mayor Console commented on an article in the Hartford Courant dated August 16, 2010 reported that President Obama supported a one time grant to save or restore teachers that were laid off. Wethersfield received \$468,882 from the grant. Deputy Mayor Console asked for the reason the Town received this money when no teachers were laid off and asked where the money is going to be used. Deputy Mayor Console noted that under Superintendent Kohlhausen the projected school enrollment for 2010-2011 was 3,739 students. This number was the basis for the amount of money needed to run the Board of Education. He understands that projections change but the Town is 68 students less this year. The Interim Superintendent stated that there are 3,817 students and 300 teachers but the actual figure for students is 3,839. Deputy Mayor Console noted that this is an issue where the financing of the Town should be under shared services. He also noted that the projected number of 300 teachers is actually 317 teachers. Deputy Mayor Console also commented that the Simsbury school system, a classification A school, spends \$20.00 per student for pens, pencils and paper. Wethersfield, a classification D school, spends \$50.00 per student. He commented that perhaps there should be a citizens' audit committee for the Board of Education. Deputy Mayor Console also commented specifically on the Crowne Plaza in Hartford that was in bankruptcy and owed \$300,000 in sales tax to the State of Connecticut and \$486,000 in city taxes to Hartford. The company's lack of payment causes a trickle down effect to the towns. Deputy Mayor Console also wanted to thank the police Department, Officer Dillon and his staff for a police raid that resulted in 1,000 bags of heroin. Deputy Mayor Console reported on the violation issues at the Housing Authority and as a liaison, he wants to enforce the violation of leases. Deputy Mayor Console also commented on the floating docking system that Parks & Recreation wants to install and he distributed information on an easy dock system that is indestructible. Deputy Mayor Console also commented on the plan that is in place now for the Library if someone were to bleed again.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that there a recognition reception for the Korean War veterans today at the Silas Deane Middle School which was well attended.

#### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges noted that he received the July numbers for tonnage collected and based on the previous three year average; the Town is down 185 tons.

Chairperson Hemmann inquired as to whether the Town will be penalized if it goes below a certain amount of tonnage.

Jeff Bridges responded that the Town has not made its 20,000 tons for the past several years, so he does not anticipate that the Town would be penalized. Jeff Bridges also reported that the

Insurance Committee recommended to the agent of record, Chris Monroe, that the Town apply for a Department of Health and Human Resources grant that is part of the new National Health Care Legislation. Five billion dollars was set aside for aid to employers who had early retirees. The Town's application to participate in the program was accepted. At the end of calendar year, the Town will submit proof of claims ranging from \$15,000 to \$90,000.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF PETER N.**

**KALOUSDIAN, JR. FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD,"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Manousos, moved **"TO TRANSFER THE UNCOLLECTED MOTOR VEHICLES TAXES TO TAX SUSPENSE STATUS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 12-165 OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES AND THE ATTACHED LIST,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that in accordance with Section 12-165 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Tax Collector has identified those uncollected motor vehicle taxes that should be transferred to tax suspense status. The total list is \$1,325.38 and is comprised of taxes due from deceased individuals. This amount is down significantly from previous lists. Although tax suspense status is considered uncollectible, efforts will continue to collect the taxes. The list will be adjusted at the close of the fiscal year for any payments received.

Councilor Kotkin noted that it was nice to see that the numbers are down and asked how much it was down from previous years.

Marlene Desjardins responded that she did not have the numbers from the previous years.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is a method to check to see if a deceased individual owes any unpaid taxes.

Marlene Desjardins responded that the Town Clerk's Office provides the Tax Department with a list monthly of individuals who passed away. Her assistant checks with the Probate Court in Newington to see who is in charge of the estate and a bill is sent to that individual.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this procedure is new to the Tax Department.

Marlene Desjardins responded that the Tax Department has just started this procedure. She also noted that some of the individuals were in nursing homes and had no assets and no estate.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO INITIATE A SURVEY, PREPARE THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AND TAKE THE ACTION NECESSARY TO EXCLUDE TEN ACRES OF THE WILKUS FARM, ON THE EAST SIDE OF WILLOW STREET, FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT’S CONSERVATION EASEMENT,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported after receiving a request from an interested party to locate a goat cheese farming operation on the Wilkus Farm property, staff contacted the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to determine if a portion of the conservation easement acreage could be leased to a farmer. The DEP responded that a long term lease would remove the property from public use and as such would not be allowable under the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. Mr. Stygar, of the DEP, further suggested that the Town might consider excluding ten acres from the conservation easement to allow for the farm use. Staff presented this information to the Wilkus Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Wednesday evening, with several proposed ten acre scenarios. The Committee voted to forward a recommendation to the Town Council to exclude ten acres, per the attached map, from the conservation easement. All other requirements related to the bond referendum and the use of municipal tax exempt bonds would still apply. Should Town Council approve this request, staff would then initiate a survey and would work with the Town Attorney and the DEP to revise the property description on the conservation easement and title insurance.

Councilor Drake reported that the Wilkus Farm Committee met several times and a public hearing was held to hear ideas from people. RaeAnn Palmer notified the Committee that 10 acres can be excluded from the easement. There aren’t any firm plans for the 10 acres but at least the land will be available at any time.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if 10 acres is the maximum number of acres that can be set aside.

Councilor Drake that a formula that was used by the State to arrive at the 10 acres.

RaeAnn Palmer noted that 10 acres was mentioned by the contact person who assisted with the state grant and she suspects that this number will not decrease the amount of grant. If the Town were to extend a long term lease on the 10 acres, that would be pushing the limit of how much of the land the Town could lease and still meet the terms of the municipal tax exempt bonds. She also noted that the Town could have the potential to earn \$15,000 a year.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor Hurley, moved **“TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE HARTFORD AVENUE STORM DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS TO COTA CONSTRUCTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BID SPECIFICATIONS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,226,”** seconded by Councilor Drake.

Jeff Bridges reported the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) informed the Town that a storm drain on Hartford Avenue, near the intersection with Main Street, was tied into the sanitary sewer system. When storm drains are connected to the sanitary sewer system, excess storm water is fed into the system, potentially causing an overflow. This project will disconnect the storm drain from the sewer system and tie it into a pipe on the north side of the street that is not connected to the sanitary sewer system. This project is part of the FY 2010-2011 Capital Improvement Program and is budgeted for \$30,000. The original project estimate assumed that the drain would need to be tied into a pipe on Main Street; however, staff has determined that the drain can be tied into a pipe on the north side of the street. Staff solicited bids for the project and is recommending award to the lowest responsible bidder, Cota Construction of Broad Brook, in the amount of \$16,226. Staff checked the firm’s references and found that they have successfully completed projects for many municipalities.

Councilor Hurley asked how many bids were received.

Jeff Bridges responded that 15 bids were received.

Councilor Hurley asked what towns the company has worked with.

Mike Turner responded that the company is from Broadbrook so they work primarily in South Windsor, Windsor and East Windsor area.

Councilor Hurley asked if this company has done a lot of drainage work.

Mike Turner responded that they do.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the savings were due to not having to tie into Main Street because it is a shorter distance.

Mike Turner responded that it is a shorter distance in that the drainage work is going parallel across the street instead of down to Main Street.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Drake, moved **“TO AWARD A BID OF \$63,000 TO 3M FOR THE PHASE I IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION DEVICE**

**SYSTEM FOR THE WETHERSFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges reported in the 2010-2011 Town of Wethersfield Budget the Council approved \$25,000 toward the overall program goal of \$150,000 (estimate) to implement a Radio Frequency Identification Device system for the book collection at the Wethersfield Public Library. In addition, the Library has received a grant of \$30,000 and has an addition \$8,600 for a total of \$63,000 to implement Phase I of the project. The Library is requesting to use 3M as the vendor resulting from an RFP process undertaken by their consortium, Library Connection. Those libraries in the consortium that are implementing RFID system are using 3M based upon the results of their RFP. Simsbury, Darien, Stamford, Cheshire, and West Hartford are using or are implementing systems through 3M.

Deputy Mayor Console complimented Laurel Goodgion on the comprehensive plan. He inquired as to how the system works.

Laurel Goodgion reported that books will continue to be checked out. The check in/check out process will be more efficient by being about to check in/check out multiply items at one time.

Councilor Kotkin noted that 3M was the original preferred provider five years ago.

Laurel Goodgion responded that she used this company when she was putting together a capital budget.

Councilor Kotkin asked how Laurel Goodgion arrived at her numbers and if there was a standard price for each library in Connecticut.

Laurel Goodgion responded she took the price from the response 3M made to the RFIP.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the numbers were estimates or firm numbers.

Laurel Goodgion responded that the numbers were estimates at this time. She will check to see how long the prices will remain.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR INTRODUCTION FOR USE OF LOCIP FUNDS FOR OLNEY ROAD AND FILE AN APPLICATION WITH THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT FOR USE OF THE FUNDS,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Jeff Bridges reported staff is recommending, based upon information from the Town's Road Manager Software, to use Local Capital Improvement Program Funds to resurface Olney Road. A memo from Mike Turner, Town Engineer, is included in the packet. The first step is to approve a resolution and file an application with the Office of Policy and management for use of the funds. The estimated cost of the Olney Road project is \$400,000. LOCIP funds available today are \$414,000. Since this is a Spring 2011 project, and the Town will receive another LOCIP allocation of approximately \$185,000 by then, there is sufficient funds for this project.

Chairperson Hemmann introduced **“THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AGREEMENTS WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.”**

#### MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 16, 2010”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 23, 2010”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Hurley abstained. The motion passed 6-0-1.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. James Streeto, asked why the Town Council is considering dividing up a property after two referendums that were voted on to remain wild.

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Road, agreed with Dr. Streeto on his comment made about dividing up the Wilkus Farm property.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, asked what happened with the Morrison Avenue matter.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that it is still on the table as they are waiting for some information to get back to the Town Council before a decision is finalized.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the 10 acres of the Wilkus Farm property and asked if the grant money was going to change.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that the grant money will not change.

Councilor Drake noted that the Town is only extending the easement and clarified that the land is not being split up. The Council is taking the opportunity to unlock the land whether or not anything will be done with it.

Robert Young commented on the AT&T boxes. He also commented that the Town had received a grant last year to designate certain streets for bike trails. He inquired as to how many "bike trail" signs were purchased and why signs were purchased through the grant. Robert Young also commented on the lack of shared services between the Board of Education and the Town and the Board of Education's recent hiring of a Finance Director.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:45 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Drake.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
Approved by Vote Of Council  
September 20, 2010